

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 7672

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PE

SUBJECT: GOP PERSONNEL CHANGES

1. ARMY GENERAL ARTEMIO GARCIA VARGAS HAS BEEN APPOINTED MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS REPLACING GENERAL RAUL MENESES ARATA WHO RESIGNED SEPTEMBER 15 FOR HEALTH REASONS. MENESES HAS SUFFERED FROM KIDNEY AILMENT FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND JUST RETURNED FROM U.S. WHERE A KIDNEY WAS REMOVED. MENESES WILL NOT RETIRE BUT HAS BEEN APPOINTED TO THE PRESIDENTIAL ADVISORY STAFF (COAP).

2. GOP ALSO ANNOUNCED APPOINTMENT OF EDUCATOR DR. LUIS SILVA SANTISTEBAN AS DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT DAILY LA CRONICA (PAPER HAD BEEN RUN BY INTERIM DIRECTOR FOLLOWING RESIGNATION OF VELASCO'S BROTHER-IN-LAW LUIS GONZALEZ POSADA ON AUGUST 29).

3. SEPTEMBER 16 PRESS REPORTS THAT RETIRED ARMY GENERAL ARTURO CAVERO CALIXTO (FORMER CHIEF OF MILITARY JOINT COMMAND IS LIKELY TO BE NAMED MAYOR OF LIMA, REPLACING DR. LIZARDO ALZAMORA PORRAS, WHO HAD SUBMITTED FORMAL RESIGNATION FOLLOWING GOVERNMENT CHANGE ALTHOUGH LEAVING DOOR AJAR FOR REAPPOINTMENT.

4. COMMENT: GENERAL GARCIA WAS COMMANDING GENERAL OF SIXTH MECHANIZED DIVISION IN TACNA AND ONE OF LEADERS OF AUGUST 29
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COUP. HE WAS EXPECTED TO RECEIVE IMPORTANT POST AND THIS

NOMINATION MAY BE IN THE FIRST INSTANCE A REWARD FOR SERVICES RENDERED. IT HAS, HOWEVER, POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE BECAUSE OF GARCIA'S REPUTATION AS A MODERATE AND HIS UNQUESTIONED LOYALTY TO MORALES BERMUDEZ. MENESES HAS BEEN CLASSIFIED AS LEFTIST (HE WAS ONE OF RADICAL COLONELS IN 1968 COUP) AND DEVELOPED INTO ONE OF SO-CALLED "VELASQUISTA" GENERALS. HIS TRANSFER TO COAP RELATES TO HEALTH REQUIREMENTS, CERTAINLY, BUT ALSO MAY INVOLVE A RUMORED MORALES BERMUDEZ EFFORT TO BRING RADICALS GENERALS OF QUESTIONABLE LOYALTY INTO PRESIDENTIAL PALACE (COAP) WHERE THEY CAN BE MORE CLOSELY OBSERVED AND THEIR ACTIVITIES CONTROLLED.

5. SILVA HAS WORKED IN EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS WITH LIMITED EXPERIENCE IN THE WORLD OF JOURNALISM. HIS POLITICAL PREDILECTIONS ARE NOT CLEAR. ONE VETERAN NEWSMAN TERMED HIM NEITHER "CHICHA" NOR "LIMINADA" (APPARENTLY NOT KNOWN AS A LEFTIST OR A MODERATE POLITICALLY). PRESUMABLY HE WILL FOLLOW GOP INFORMATION POLICY WITHOUT PLAYING SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN MOLDING IT. LEFTIST FORMER EXPRESO DIRECTOR ALBERTO RUIZ-ELDREDGE HAD BEEN RUMORED FOR THE LA CRONICA JOB. FACT THAT HE WAS NOT APPOINTED MAY MEAN THAT MODERATES IN GOP OUT-MANEUVORED RADICALS ON THAT ISSUE.

6. RUMORED APPOINTMENT OF RETIRED GENERAL ARTURO CAVERO CALIXTO AS LIMA'S MAYOR INTERESTING IN THAT GOP IN THIS CASE HAS REPLACED A CIVILIAN WITH MILITARY OFFICER (EVEN IF RETIRED). THIS POST IS LARGELY AN ADMINISTRATIVE AND CEREMONIAL ONE WITHOUT MAJOR POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE.
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